

Aging with Grace:

How to Avoid Harmful Food and Drug Interactions

Did you know ?

As we get older, our bodies have less muscle and more fat; our kidneys, heart, liver and intestines tend to function less efficiently. Those changes make us more sensitive to the side effects of drugs.

Taking three or more medications per day is a risk factor for malnutrition.

Prescription drugs, over the counter medicines, and dietary supplements—vitamins, minerals, and herbs—can affect how our bodies absorb, use, and excrete nutrients in foods.

Medications may also affect our sense of taste, and appetite.

Others may cause nausea, dry mouth, drowsiness, constipation or diarrhea. Risk of malnutrition is

greatest when we are not eating a balanced diet, and we are taking multiple drugs for long-term treatment of chronic disease.

Foods and beverages can affect how our bodies use, or metabolize, drugs. The presence or absence of food in the stomach may speed or delay the absorption of some drugs, and increase or decrease their effectiveness. Other foods may alter the chemical actions of drugs.



Here are some tips for working with your health care team to protect your health, and maximize the effectiveness of the drugs you take:

1. **Make a list of all your medications**, including over-the-counter drugs and dietary or herbal supplements. Bring the list with you when you visit your doctor. Or, put all of your medications into a shopping bag and bring them with you. If you have more than one doctor, make sure at least one is aware of everything you take. Let that doctor know any time your health status, diet, or medications change.
2. **Ask your doctor or pharmacist the following questions:**
 - How do these drugs work in my body and what are common side effects?
 - Are there any foods or beverages that I should avoid while taking these medications?
 - Should I take my medications with food or on an empty stomach?
 - Would any vitamin, mineral or other drug interfere with any of my medications?
3. **Fill all of your prescriptions at one pharmacy.**
4. **Write down all symptoms** you experience while taking your medications and supplements.
5. **Beware of alcohol.** Beer, wine, and liquor can cause dangerous side effects when used in combination with many common drugs. Always check with your health care provider or pharmacist before using alcohol.
6. **Take medicine with a full glass of water** unless directed otherwise by your health care provider.
7. **Avoid mixing medications** into food or hot drink because you may destroy or change the effectiveness of the drug.
8. **Gather all the facts.** Talk to your doctor before deciding to take any herbal, vitamin or mineral supplement.
9. **Ask your doctor for a referral to a registered dietitian.** If you are experiencing changes in taste, appetite, weight gain or loss, or difficulty with chewing, swallowing or digestion, a dietitian can help you plan meals to overcome those side effects.



The following are a few examples of food/drug interactions:



St. John's wort: decreases the blood concentration of some drugs used to treat HIV, and may also interfere with the metabolism of drugs used to treat heart disease (digoxin, beta-blockers) and certain cancers (tamoxifen, taxol). The herb may increase the effects of drugs used to treat depression and anxiety, such as Prozac, Paxil and Zoloft.

Ginger, garlic, ginkgo, cranberry juice and high doses of vitamin E (400 IU or more): enhance the effects of the blood-thinning drug, warfarin or Coumadin and increase the risk of bleeding. One compound in garlic is thought to be at least as potent as aspirin.

High protein diet: may inhibit the effectiveness of the anti-Parkinson drug, Levodopa.



Grapefruit: increases the strength of some drugs, including the “statins”—Lipitor, Mevacor and Zocor, making them potentially toxic. The fruit and juice can also increase blood levels of the heart drugs, nifedipine or Procardia, leading to a dangerous drop in blood pressure. The effects of grapefruit can last for up to 72 hours!

Calcium-rich foods (dairy) and supplements: bind with the antibiotics, ciprofloxacin (Cipro), and tetracycline, limiting the absorption of the drugs, and making them less effective.

Caffeine-containing beverages: reduce the effectiveness of anti-anxiety medications.



Alcohol: causes drowsiness when taken with anti-histamines. Mixing alcohol with pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin and ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), increases the risk of stomach upset, bleeding, and liver damage.

Soy: may interfere with or increase the effect of hormone replacement therapy.

Aged or fermented foods (aged cheese, red wine, beer, cured meats, caffeinated beverages, and others): can cause a dangerous increase in blood pressure if you are taking monamine-oxidase-inhibitors (MAOs), such as Nardil or Parnate, for the treatment of depression.



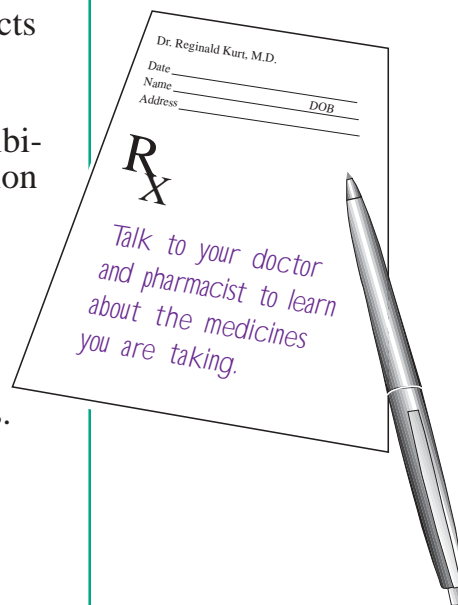
For more information:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration: www.fda.gov

Physician's Desk Reference Guide for Drugs, includes food/drug interactions: www.pdrhealth.com/

For a comprehensive review of dietary supplements: www.consumerlab.com

Integrative Medicine Service at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (NY) reviews over 130 herbal products, including potential drug interactions: www.mskcc.org/aboutherbs



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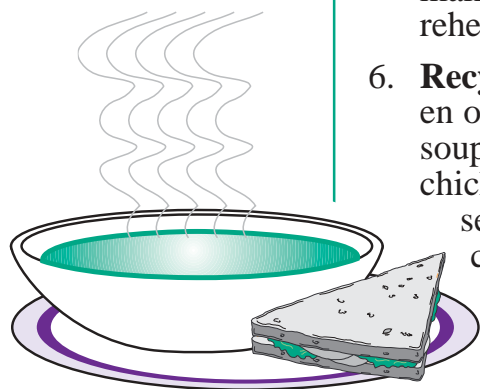
How to Put More FUN into Cooking for One

Do you ever feel like it's not worth your time and energy to cook for just one person?

Perhaps you've spent years cooking for a spouse and children, then suddenly find yourself alone in the kitchen. Maybe you've grown tired of leftovers, or struggle on a fixed income.

Cooking and eating alone can be a challenge. However, simple foods we make from scratch tend to be lower in fat, sodium, sugar and calories, compared to commercially prepared and processed foods, or foods purchased away from home.

Remember: your health, strength and stamina depend on eating well!



The following tips on meal planning, food shopping, storage and cooking can help you eat well and put more fun into cooking for one:

1. **Plan ahead.** Plan meals around the foods you enjoy, plus grocery specials. Include a protein-rich food (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, milk, beans or nuts), plus a whole grain, and at least one fruit or vegetable at each meal. Breakfast might include a bowl of hot oatmeal topped with chopped apples, pecans and raisins and a glass of skim milk.
2. **Eat “in-season.”** Sweet potatoes and turkey are on sale in the fall; blueberries and peaches are least expensive in July, and asparagus tastes best and costs less in the spring. Savor the flavors of the season, and pocket the savings.
3. **Turn your plate into a colorful work of art.** Fruits and vegetables with the deepest colors—green, red, yellow, orange, blue and purple—deliver the most nutrients. Instead of plain iceberg lettuce, liven up your next salad with fresh spinach, a few radishes, baby carrots and red cabbage.
4. **Make a big salad to last a few days.** Mix assorted washed salad greens, leaf lettuce and vegetables, and store in your refrigerator in a covered bowl. Your salad will be ready for you to enjoy with dressing, or mix with pasta, canned beans (rinsed), sliced cheese, hard-cooked egg, and diced meat for a complete meal.
5. **Reduce recipe portion size.** Cut ingredients in half, or make the full amount, and freeze individual servings to reheat in the microwave later.
6. **Recycle leftovers.** If you make rice to go with roast chicken one night, use leftovers in a chicken, rice and vegetable soup the next day. Or, try a Chinese stir-fry with strips of chicken and vegetables sautéed with garlic and ginger, served over rice. Use extra rice for pudding, and leftover chicken in sandwiches. Chicken and rice freeze well too. Tomato sauce and meatballs are another example.



Enjoy them one night with spaghetti, then freeze for later use on sautéed zucchini, or in a small pan of lasagna.

Safety Hints: Refrigerate leftovers within two hours. Use leftovers within 2 to 3 days; for longer, safe storage, use your freezer.

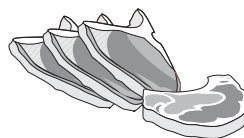
7. **Shop at your local farmer's market** for the freshest, best-tasting fruits and vegetables, and enjoy socializing with friends. If you are 60 and older you may qualify for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program. Call 1-800-392-8209 or, go to: www.dhss.state.mo.us/MissouriNutrition/



8. **Share bargains.** Sale prices for larger packages only save money if you don't end up throwing food away.

When 10 pounds of potatoes cost less than 5 pounds, call a friend to share the bag and split the cost.

9. **Ask your grocer for help.** Most butchers are happy to cut meat into smaller portions; the produce manager can divide large packages of fresh vegetables. You don't have to buy more than you can use.



10. **Buy frozen vegetables in plastic bags.** Add as much as you'd like to soups or stews to add color, flavor, fiber and nutrients. Or, simply microwave a serving in a small amount of water for a quick side dish.
11. **Keep your kitchen, pantry and freezer stocked** with nutritious, fix-in-a-flash foods. Some suggestions: frozen cheese ravioli, a jar of tomato sauce, shredded and sliced cheese, yogurt, canned tuna and salmon, low-sodium canned vegetables, beans and soups, peanut butter, whole grain cereal, and canned and dried fruits.
12. **Maximize your microwave.** If you buy frozen dinners, choose those that provide no more than 800 milligrams of sodium, and 15 grams of fat or less per meal. Balance frozen dinners with fresh fruit, salad or extra vegetable, and a glass of skim milk.
13. **Be creative with herbs, spices and lemon juice** to perk up the taste of your food. Keep a pot of fresh herbs growing in a sunny windowsill.
14. **Invite friends over for a weekly potluck.** Food tastes better when it's shared with conversation and laughter. If everyone brings a dish, you'll have company plus a greater variety of foods to enjoy.



15. **Set the stage:** Create a dining space that is inviting and attractive. Use your favorite dishes, colorful placemat and cloth napkin; put a small bouquet of flowers on the table; light a candle; play soft music—all add pleasure to eating and improve digestion. You're worth it!

Storage Hints & Ideas:

- Peel and store extra ripe bananas in a freezer bag for later use in banana bread.
- Open large packages of meat cuts and repackage into smaller, single-meal sized portions. Wrap meat in freezer paper or other air- and moisture-tight wrap.
- Buy a flat of strawberries, then freeze trays of berries and store in a freezer bag. Toss them into the blender with low-fat milk and plain yogurt for a creamy, frosty smoothie all year long.
- Store bread and tortillas in the freezer to prevent mold growth. Bread stales faster when stored at refrigerator temperatures.

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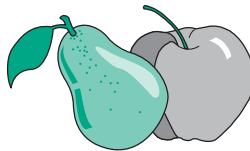
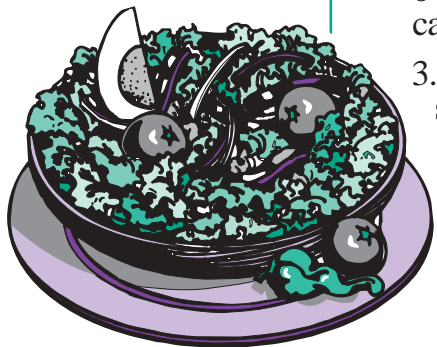
How to Achieve a Healthy Weight...for Good!

Do you ever wonder what happened to your youthful figure?

You're not alone! Many women complain that as they've gotten older, their waists are thicker, and they have a harder time fitting into their clothes.

It's not fair! But it's a fact...

As we age, our bodies naturally tend to deposit more fat in our mid-section and within our muscles. In fact, at any given weight, the older we are, the more body fat we have. At the same time, we lose bone and muscle. The less muscle we have, the fewer calories we burn, and the easier it is to gain weight.



Are you an apple or a pear?

If most of your weight is stored in your middle, you are an “apple,” and at greater risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. If you tend to gain weight on your hips and thighs, you are a “pear,” and are not considered “high risk” for those diseases. However, no matter where we store our body fat, excess weight strains our joints, and may contribute to disability and depression.

The good news: it's never too late to turn back the clock with smart food choices, and daily physical activity. Instead of “dieting,” focus on eating well. If you're overweight, losing just 5 to 10% of your body weight will produce medical benefits and increase feelings of well-being.



The reality: losing weight is easy compared to keeping it off. Eating less is the main way to lose weight, but daily physical activity is the number one way to keep weight off. **The key:** Make lifestyle changes you can live with for the rest of your life.

Ready to get started? The following tips are proven methods for safe, long-lasting weight loss. Be patient. The safest weight loss occurs at a rate of 1 to 3 pounds per week. Slow and steady wins this race!

1. **Keep a food diary.** Write down everything you eat during the day in a small notebook. Writing down what we eat keeps our behavior in check.
2. **Eat a nutritious breakfast.** When we skip the morning meal, we tell our bodies to slow down because we're continuing our overnight fast. When our metabolic rate slows, we burn fewer calories.
3. **Shrink your portions.** The more food we're served, and the larger our plates and cups, the more we'll eat and drink. Use smaller dishes and you'll automatically consume less. When eating out, share entrees, order from the appetizer menu, or take part of your meal home to enjoy the next day.



4. **Eat more high-fiber foods**, such as fruits, vegetables, dried beans, and whole grains. They help us feel full and satisfied. Trade white bread for 100 % whole wheat, corn flakes for bran flakes, and white rice for brown. Check bread and cereal labels and choose those that provide at least 2-3 grams of fiber per serving. Processed and fast foods tend to be low in fiber, and high in fat, sugar and calories.

Enjoy an apple, baby carrots, or banana for a mid-morning snack; add canned beans to soups, stews and salads; and, serve fruit for dessert.

5. **Enjoy 2 to 3 servings of dairy products each day.** Skim or low-fat milk, reduced-fat cheeses, and yogurt provide calcium and protein. Both nutrients play a role in reducing body fat.

Use skim milk on your breakfast cereal; make a blender smoothie with fruit, milk and yogurt; snack on reduced-fat cheese and sliced fruit; top steamed vegetables with shredded cheese; and make puddings “from scratch” using low-fat milk.



6. **Watch less television.** The more TV we watch, the more body fat we have. We burn fewer calories while we watch TV, and we also tend to eat more poor-quality foods. Limit TV to less than two hours per day, and have more fun!

Enjoy these activities instead: go to the library; join a book club; take an art class; write a letter; make a scrap book; listen to music; take a walk; enjoy a soothing bath; call a friend; find a new hobby; or, get involved in your community.

7. **Find ways to relieve stress.** Learning how to relax is critical for keeping weight under control. Some of the best stress busters include: deep breathing, progressive relaxation, meditation, and physical activity. Seek social support and build relationships, too. Reaching out to others is good for our emotional and physical health.

8. **Plan to eat regular meals and snacks.** When we become overly hungry, we tend to eat more, and pay less attention to the quality of the foods we select.

9. **Enjoy daily physical activity**, for a minimum of 30 minutes per day, most days of the week. Alternate aerobic exercises that use large muscle groups—walking, biking, swimming and dancing—with a weight-training program. The more muscle we have, the more energy we burn, the stronger we are, and the better able we are to live independently. Find a “buddy” or friend to join you.



10. **Be gentle with yourself.** We all have setbacks from time to time. Just pick up where you left off, and focus on the positive changes you’ve made. Plan ahead for “triggers” that might lead to overeating. For example, if you’re going to a party, bring along a healthful dish to share. If you’re taking a car trip, pack some nutritious snacks.

Making an effort to control your weight most of the time is worth your time and energy. Controlling our weight improves the quality of our lives.

For more information:

Keep up with the latest research on nutrition, health and aging at the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services: www.dhss.state.mo.us/MissouriNutrition

For new, easy, delicious and nutritious recipes: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/ktb_recipebk/index.htm

Women’s source for diet, aging and health: www.4woman.gov

Download a food and activity record, plus tips for dining out and behavior change: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/diary.htm

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